

REMARKS

Applicants reply to the Final Office Action dated September 22, 2005 within two-months. Thus, Applicants request an Advisory Action, if necessary. Claims 21-33 were pending in the application and the Examiner rejects claims 21-33. Applicants add new dependent claim 34. Support for new claim 34 and the amendments may be found in the originally-filed specification, claims, and figures. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejects claims 21-30 and 32-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shoman et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,584,451 B1 ("Shoman") in view of Halbert et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,101,484 ("Halbert") in view of Bi et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,311,178 ("Bi") in view of Walker U.S. Patent No. 5,794,207 ("Walker"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In general, Shoman discloses a system for aggregating the buying power of individual buyers in order to obtain volume discounts on goods and services. The Shoman system includes a web interface to enable sellers to post products and services for sale, as well as an indication of a minimum low price they are willing to accept. Buyers interact with the system to indicate an interest in certain products and services along with an indication of a maximum price they are willing to pay. The Shoman system then finds the largest quantity at the smallest price for desired goods and determines if a deal can be completed between the sellers and buyers.

Halbert generally discloses a market equilibrium management system for selling goods and services through an online buying group. According to Halbert, in order to join a buying group, a consumer must indicate a maximum buying price for a product or service. The maximum buying price essentially locks the consumer into making the purchase if a seller is able to meet the buying price. The binding purchase offer is guaranteed by the consumer's credit card. The buyer's information, including the binding purchase offer, is then stored in a database. The Halbert system then collects a group of buyers from the database with binding purchase offers for the same products or services. From this data, the Halbert system is able to create real-time yield management information that can be provided to sellers to recommend a lower price per unit.

Bi generally discloses a computer matching system for conducting international trade. Specifically, the Bi system is limited to an improved search engine, wherein a user can define a number of specific parameters in order to narrow the results. A commerce database contains a number of records for product offers such as product description, market position, date of offer, date of delivery, offering entity, price, volume, etc. A consumer may create a search record that contains various requirement parameters which are used to find products most closely matching the defined requirements.

Walker generally discloses a method and apparatus for facilitating bilateral buyer-driven commerce. Specifically, the Walker system enables a buyer to define conditions relating to a desired purchase of goods and/or services, which are used to construct a binding purchase contract. The system then transmits the binding contract to a number of qualified merchants who may view the contract and make a decision as to whether or not to accept the terms of the contract. If the merchant accepts the terms of the contract, then the merchant enters into the contract with the buyer.

Each of Shoman, Halbert, Bi, and Walker disclose systems that enable individual and/or groups of buyers to define a price at which they would be willing to pay for a particular good and/or service. According to Shoman and Halbert, the offer to buy inherently includes two parameters; a purchase price and an item identifier. Bi discloses a system whereby multiple parameters may be defined. Significantly, all of the references disclose parameters that are defined by the purchaser. However, in a corporate purchasing environment, the purchaser can be defined in two dimensions; the corporation who is paying for the purchase, and the employee who is making the purchase decision. According to this scenario, it would be desirable to enable both entities to define rules for the purchase. For example, an employee may want to have the ability to define a preference for aisle seating for flight bookings. This type of preference would not likely be of concern to the corporation because the cost of an aisle seat is the same as any other seating arrangement within the same class. The corporation would likely choose to restrict the employee from booking a flight with first-class accommodations because of the extra cost that the corporation would incur. However, neither of the cited references disclose such a multi-dimensional parameter scheme to more precisely define and control purchase of travel services. As such, neither Shoman, Halbert, Bi, Walker, nor any combination thereof, disclose or suggest at least, "receiving, at a travel reservations database, a user profile comprising consumer rules

defined by a consumer and an organization profile comprising organization rules defined by an organization,” and “storing, at said travel reservations database, a consumer itinerary comprising said consumer rules and said organization rules, wherein said travel reservations database comprises a plurality of consumer itineraries,” as similarly recited by independent claims 21 and 32.

Dependent claims 22-30, 33, and new claim 34 variously depend from independent claims 21 and 32. As such, dependent claims 22-30, 33, and 34 are differentiated from the cited references for at least the reasons described above, as well as in view of their own respective features.

In view of the above remarks and amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims properly set forth that which Applicants regard as their invention and are allowable over the cited references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the Examiner’s convenience, if that would help further prosecution of the subject Application. Applicants authorize and respectfully request that any fees due be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-2814.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: September 8, 2006

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